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11499
1858

THE CRITIC;

OR,

A TRAGEDY REHEARSED:

ALTERED FROM SHERIDAN;

AS IT WAS PERFORMED AT THE

TRIENNIAL VISITATION OF READING SCHOOL,

IN OCTOBER, 1824.

F



LONDON :

Printed by A. J. Valpy, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street.

SOLD BY THE LONDON AND READING BOOKSELLERS.

1825.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Play is published as a specimen of the purity and chastity which ought to attend a School exhibition. It may be affirmed, in the words of a Prologue to a former play :—

“No sound offends the ear, no sight the eye;
All here is innocence, all modesty.”

The **CRITIC** followed the **ALCESTIS** of **EURIPIDES**, which was performed for the benefit of the **NATIONAL SCHOOLS**. Should any profit arise from this publication, it will be applied to the same object.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Dangle . . .	Mr. HALL.
Mrs. Dangle . . .	Mr. STATHAM.
Sneer . . .	Mr. CURTIES.
Sir Fretful Plagiary . .	Mr. PALAIRET.
Puff . . .	Mr. RICHARDSON.
Prompter . . .	Mr. BRISCOE.

Lord Burleigh . . .	Mr. MANSELL.
Earl of Leicester . . .	Mr. CAMERON.
Sir Christopher Hatton . .	Mr. LOMER.
Sir Walter Raleigh . . .	Mr. CHALMERS.
Governor of Tilbury Fort . .	Mr. MOORE.
Constable . . .	Mr. BULLEY.
Don Fero!o Whiskerandos	Mr. THOMAS.

Tilburina . . .	Mr. TURNER.
Nora . . .	Mr. WOODWARD.
Ellena . . .	Mr. ROBERTS.
Pollina . . .	Mr. PRENDERGAST.

THE CRITIC.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—MR. and MRS. DANGLE at Breakfast,
and reading Newspapers.

Dang. [*Reading*] *ACCOUNT of the Ashantees.*
Rot the Ashantees!—*State of the American Navy.*
Burn the American Navy!—*Thoughts on the Holy*
Alliance. Hang the Holy Alliance!—Nothing but
politics! and I hate all politics but theatrical politics.—
Where's the Morning Chronicle?

Mrs. D. Yes, that's your Gazette.

Dang. So here we have it.—*Theatrical intelligence*
extraordinary.—*We hear there is a new tragedy in*
rehearsal at Drury-lane Theatre, called the Spanish
Armada, said to be written by Mr. Puff, a gentleman
well known in the theatrical world. If we may allow
ourselves to give credit to the report of the performers,
who, truth to say, are in general but indifferent judges,
this piece abounds with the most striking and received
beauties of modern composition.—So! I am very glad
my friend Puff's tragedy is in such forwardness.—

Crit.

A

Mrs. Dangle, my dear, you will be very glad to hear that Puff's tragedy——

Mrs. D. Mr. Dangle, why will you plague me about such nonsense?—Now the plays are begun I shall have no peace.—Is it not sufficient to make yourself ridiculous by your passion for the theatre, without continually teasing me to join you? Why can't you ride your hobbyhorse without desiring to place me on a pillion behind you, Mr. Dangle?

Dang. Nay, my dear, I was only going to read——

Mrs. D. I have no patience with you!—have you not made yourself the jest of all your acquaintance by your interference in matters where you have no business? Are not you called a theatrical Quidnunc, and a mock Mecænas to second-hand authors?

Dang. True; my power with the managers is pretty notorious; but is 'it no credit to have applications from all quarters for my interest?—From lords to recommend fiddlers, from ladies to get boxes, from authors to get answers, and from actors to get engagements?

Mrs. D. Yes, truly; you have contrived to get a share in all the plague and trouble of theatrical property, without the profit, or even the credit, of the abuse that attends it.

Dang. I am sure, Mrs. Dangle, you are no loser by it, however; you have all the advantages of it;—might not you, last winter, have had the reading of the new pantomime a fortnight previous to its performance? And did not my friend, Mr. Smatter, dedicate

his last farce to you at my particular request, Mrs. Dangle?

Mrs. D. Yes; but was not the farce condemned, Mr. Dangle? And to be sure it is extremely pleasant to have one's house made the motley rendezvous of all the lackeys of literature:—The very high change of trading authors and jobbing critics!

Dang. Mrs. Dangle, I say the Stage is *the Mirror of Nature*, and the actors are *the Abstract and brief Chronicles of the Time*. And pray, what can a man of taste study better in his hours of recreation?—Besides, you will not easily persuade me that there is no credit or importance in being at the head of a band of critics, who take upon them to decide for the whole town, whose opinion and patronage all writers solicit, and whose recommendation no manager dares refuse!

Mrs. D. Ridiculous!—Both managers and authors of the least merit laugh at your pretensions.—The *Public* is their *critic*—without whose fair approbation they know no play can rest on the stage, and with whose applause they welcome such attacks as yours, and laugh at the malice of them, where they cannot at the wit.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Sneer, sir, to wait on you.

Dang. O, show Mr. Sneer up. [*Exit Servant*]
Plague on't, now we must appear loving and affectionate, or Sneer will hitch us into a story.

THE CRITIC.

Mrs. D. With all my heart ; you cannot be more ridiculous than you are.

Dang. You are enough to provoke——

Enter MR. SNEER.

—Ha ! my dear Sneer, I am vastly glad to see you. My dear, here's Mr. Sneer.

Mrs. D. Good morning to you, sir.

Dang. Mrs. Dangle and I have been diverting ourselves with the papers.—Pray, Sneer, won't you go to Drury-lane Theatre the first night of Puff's tragedy ?

Sneer. Yes ; but I suppose one shall not be able to get in. But here, Dangle, I have brought you two pieces, one of which you must exert yourself to make some of the managers accept, I can tell you that, for it is written by a person of consequence.

Dang. So ! now my plagues are beginning.

Sneer. Ay, I am glad of it, for now you'll be happy. Why, my dear Dangle, it is a pleasure to see how you enjoy your volunteer fatigue, and your solicited solicitations.

Dang. It is a great trouble—yet, it is pleasant too.—Why, sometimes of a morning, I have a dozen people call on me at breakfast time, whose faces I never saw before, nor ever desire to see again.

Sneer. That must be very pleasant indeed !

Dang. And not a week but I receive fifty letters, and not a line in them about any business of my own.

Sneer. An amusing correspondence!

Dang. [*Reading*] *Bursts into tears, and exit.*
What, is this a tragedy?

Sneer. No, that is a genteel comedy, not a translation—only *taken from the French*; it is written in a style which they have lately tried to run down; the true sentimental, and nothing ridiculous in it from the beginning to the end.

Mrs. D. Well, if they had kept to that, I should not have been such an enemy to the stage: there was some edification to be got from those pieces, Mr. Sneer!

Sneer. I am quite of your opinion, Mrs. Dangle; the theatre, in proper hands, might certainly be made the school of morality; but now, I am sorry to say it, people seem to go there principally for their entertainment.

Mrs. D. It would have been more to the credit of the managers to have kept it in the other line.

Sneer. Undoubtedly, madam; and hereafter perhaps to have had it recorded, that in the midst of a luxurious and dissipated age, they preserved two houses in the capital, where the conversation was always moral at least, if not entertaining!

Dang. But what have we here?—This seems a very odd—

Sneer. O, that's a comedy, on a very new plan; replete with wit and mirth, yet of a most serious moral! You see it is called *The Reformed House-breaker*; where by the mere force of humor, house-

breaking is put into so ridiculous a light, that if the piece has its proper run, I have no doubt that bolts and bars will be entirely useless by the end of the season.

Dang. This is new indeed !

Sneer. Yes ; it is written by a particular friend of mine, who has discovered that the follies and foibles of society are subjects unworthy the notice of the comic muse, who should be taught to stoop only at the greater vices and blacker crimes of humanity—gibbeting capital offences in five acts, and pillorying petty larcenies in two.—In short, his idea is to dramatise the penal laws, and make the stage a court of ease to the Old Bailey.

Dang. It is truly moral.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir Fretful Plagiary, sir.

Dang. Beg him to walk up.—[*Exit Servant*]
Now, Mrs. Dangle, sir Fretful Plagiary is an author to your own taste.

Mrs. D. I confess he is a favorite of mine, because every body else abuses him.

Sneer.—Very much to the credit of your charity, madam, if not of your judgment.

Dang. But, he allows no merit to any author but himself, that's the truth on't—though he is my friend.

Sneer. Never.—He is as envious as an old maid verging on the desperation of six and thirty : and

then the insidious humility, with which he seduces you to give a free opinion on any of his works, can be exceeded only by the petulant arrogance with which he is sure to reject your observations.

Dang. Very true,—though he is my friend.

Sneer. Then his affected contempt of all newspaper strictures; though, at the same time, he is the sorest man alive, and shrinks like scorched parchment from the fiery ordeal of true criticism.

Dang. There is no denying it—though he is my friend.

Sneer. You have read the tragedy he has just finished, have not you?

Dang. O yes; he sent it to me yesterday.

Sneer. Well, and you think it execrable, do not you?

Dang. Why, between ourselves, I must own—though he is my friend—that it is one of the most—He is here [*Aside*]*—finished and most admirable perform—*

[*Sir F. without*] Mr. Sneer with him, did you say?

Enter SIR FRETFUL.

Ah, my dear friend!—we were just speaking of your tragedy.—Admirable, sir Fretful, admirable!

Sneer. You never did any thing beyond it, sir Fretful—never in your life.

Sir F. You make me extremely happy; for without a compliment, my dear Sneer, there is not a man

in the world whose judgment I value as I do yours—and Mr. Dangle's.

Mrs. D. They are only laughing at you, sir Fretful; for it was but just now that——

Dang. Mrs. Dangle! Ah, sir Fretful, you know Mrs. Dangle.—My friend Sneer was rallying just now—He knows how she admires you, and——

Sir. F. O, I am sure Mr. Sneer has more taste and sincerity than to——A double-faced fellow!

[*Aside.*

Dang. Yes, yes—Sneer will jest—but a better humored——

Sir F. O, I know——

Dang. He has a ready turn for ridicule—his wit costs him nothing.——

Sir F. No,—or I should wonder how he came by it. [*Aside.*

Dang. But, sir Fretful, have you sent your play to the managers yet?—or can I be of any service to you?

Sir F. No, no, I thank you; I believe the piece had sufficient recommendation with it.—I thank you though—I sent it to the manager of Covent-garden Theatre this morning.

Sneer. I should have thought now, that it might have been cast (as the actors call it) better at Drury-lane.

Sir F. O no—never send a play there while I live—harkye!

[*Whispers Sneer.*

Sneer. Writes himself!—I know he does—

THE CRITIC.

Sir F. I say nothing—I take away from no man's merit—am hurt at no man's good fortune—I say nothing—But this I will say—through all my knowledge of life, I have observed—that there is not a passion so strongly rooted in the human heart as envy!

Sneer. I believe you have reason for what you say, indeed.

Sir F. Besides—I can tell you it is not always so safe to leave a play in the hands of those, who write themselves.

Sneer. What, they may steal from them, hey, my dear Plagiary?

Sir F. Steal!—to be sure they may; and serve your best thoughts as gipsies do stolen children, disfigure them to make them pass for their own.

Sneer. But your present work is a sacrifice to Melpomene, and he, you know, never——

Sir F. That is no security.—A dexterous plagiarist may do any thing.—Why, sir, for aught I know, he might take out some of the best things in my tragedy, and put them into his own comedy.

Sneer. That might be done, I dare say.

Sir F. And then, if such a person gives you the least hint or assistance, he is very apt to take the merit of the whole—

Dang. If it succeeds.

Sir F. Ay,—but with regard to this piece, I think I can hit that gentleman, for I can safely say he never read it.

Crit.

B

Sneer. I'll tell you how you may hurt him more—

Sir F. How?

Sneer. Say he wrote it.

Sir F. Plague on it now, *Sneer*, I shall take it ill.
—I believe you want to take away my character as an author!

Sneer. Then I am sure you ought to be very much obliged to me.

Sir F. Hey!—Sir!

Dang. O, you know, he never means what he says.

Sir F. Sincerely then—you do like the piece?

Sneer. Wonderfully!

Sir F. But come now, there must be something, that you think might be mended, hey?—Mr. Dangle, has nothing struck you?

Dang. —Why, it is but an ungracious thing for the most part to—

Sir F. —With most authors it is just so indeed; they are in general strangely tenacious!—But, for my part, I am never so well pleased as when a judicious critic points out any defect to me; for what is the purpose of showing a work to a friend, if you do not mean to profit by his opinion?

Sneer. Very true. Why then, though I seriously admire the piece upon the whole, yet there is one small objection; which, if you will give me leave, I will mention.

Sir F. Sir, you cannot oblige me more.

Sneer. I think it wants incident.

Sir F. No, sure!—you surprise me!—wants incidents!—

Sneer. Yes; I own, I think the incidents are too few.

Sir F.—Believe me, Mr. Sneer, there is no person, for whose judgment I have a more implicit deference.—But I protest to you, Mr. Sneer, I am only apprehensive that the incidents are too crowded.—My dear Dangle, how does it strike you?

Dang. Really I cannot agree with my friend Sneer.—I think the plot quite sufficient; and the four first acts by many degrees the best I ever read or saw in my life. If I might venture to suggest any thing, it is that—the interest rather falls off in the fifth.—

Sir F.—Rises, I believe you mean, sir.

Dang. No, I do not, upon my word.

Sir F. Yes, yes, you do, upon my honor—it certainly does not fall off, I assure you—No, no, it does not fall off. Does it, Mr Sneer?

Sneer. Truly, I do not see how it can well fall off!

Dang. Now, Mrs Dangle, did not you say it struck you in the same light?

Mrs. D. No, indeed, I did not—I did not see a fault in any part of the play from the beginning to the end.

Sir F. Upon my honor the women are the best judges after all!

Mrs. D. Or if I made any objection, I am sure it was to nothing in the piece! but that I was afraid it was, on the whole, a little too long.

Sir F. Pray, madam, do you speak as to duration of time; or do you mean that the story is tediously spun out?

Mrs. D. O, no.—I speak only with reference to the usual length of acting plays.

Sir F. Then I am very happy—very happy, indeed—because the play is a short play, a remarkably short play:—I should not venture to differ with a lady on a point of taste; but, on these occasions, the watch, you know, is the critic.

Mrs. D. Then, I suppose, it must have been Mr. Dangle's drawling manner of reading it to me.

Sir F. O, if Mr. Dangle read it! that is quite another affair!—But I assure you, Mrs. Dangle, the first evening you can spare me three hours and a half, I will undertake to read you the whole from beginning to end, with the prologue and epilogue, and allow time for the music between the acts.

Mrs. D. I hope to see it on the stage next. [*Exit.*]

Dang. Well, sir Fretful, I wish you may be able to get rid as easily of the newspaper criticisms as you do of ours.

Sir F. The newspapers!—Sir, they are the most villanous—licentious—abominable—Not that I ever read them—No—I make it a rule never to look into a newspaper.

Dang. You are quite right—for it certainly must hurt an author of delicate feelings to see the liberties they take.

Sir F. No !—quite the contrary ; their abuse is, in fact, the best panegyric—I like it of all things.—An author's reputation is in danger only from their support.

Sneer. Why that is true—and that attack now on you the other day——

Sir F. —What? where?.....

Dang. Ay, you mean in a paper of Thursday ; it was completely ill-natured, to be sure.

Sir F. O, so much the better—Ha! ha! ha!—I would not have it otherwise.

Dang. Certainly it is only to be laughed at ; for—

Sir F. —You do not happen to recollect what the fellow said, do you?

Sneer. Pray, Dangle—Sir Fretful seems a little anxious——

Sir F. —O, no !—anxious,—not I,—not in the least.—I—But one may as well hear, you know.

Dang. Sneer, do you recollect?—Make out something. [Aside.

Sneer. I will, [To Dangle]—Yes, yes, I remember perfectly.

Sir F. Well, and pray now—Not that it signifies—what might the gentleman say?

Sneer. Why, he roundly asserts that you have not the slightest invention, or original genius whatever ; though you are the greatest traducer of all other authors living.

Sir F. Ha! ha! ha!—very good!

Sneer. That as to comedy you have not one idea of your own, he believes, even in your common place-

book, where stray jokes, and pilfered witticisms are kept with as much method as the ledger of the lost and stolen office.

Sir F. —Ha! ha! ha!—very pleasant!

Sneer. Nay, that you are so unlucky as not to have the skill even to steal with taste :—but that you glean from the refuse of obscure volumes, where more judicious plagiarists have been before you ; so that the body of your work is a composition of dregs and sediments—like a bad tavern's worst wine.

Sir F. Ha! ha!

Sneer. In your more serious efforts, he says, your bombast would be less intolerable, if the thoughts were ever suited to the expression ; but the homeliness of the sentiment stares through the fantastic encumbrance of its fine language, like a clown in a uniform !

Sir F. Ha! ha!

Sneer. That your occasional tropes and flowers suit the general coarseness of your style, as tambour sprigs would a ground of linsey-wolsey ; while your imitations of Shakspeare resemble the mimicry of Falstaff's page, and are about as near the standard of the original.

Sir F. Ha!——

Sneer. —In short, that even the finest passages you steal are of no service to you ; for the poverty of your own language prevents their assimilating ! so that they lie on the surface like lumps of marl on a barren moor, encumbering what it is not in their power to fertilise !

Sir F. [*After great agitation*] — Now another person would be vexed at this.

Sneer. Oh! but I would not have told you, only to divert you.

Sir F. I know it—I am diverted.—Ha! ha! ha!—not the least invention!—Ha! ha! ha! very good!—very good!

Sneer. Yes—no genius! Ha! ha! ha!

Dang. A severe rogue! Ha! ha! ha! But you are quite right, sir Fretful, never to read such nonsense.

Sir F. To be sure—for if there is any thing to one's praise, it is a foolish vanity to be gratified at it; and if it is abuse,—why one is always sure to hear of it from some good natured friend.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Puff, sir, has sent word that the last rehearsal is to be this morning, and that he will call on you presently.

Dang. That is true—I shall certainly be at home. [*Exit Servant*] Now, sir Fretful, if you have a mind to have justice done you in the way of answer—Mr. Puff is your man.

Sir F. Pshaw! sir, why should I wish to have it answered, when I tell you I am pleased at it?

Dang. True, I had forgot that.—But I hope you are not fretted at what Mr. Sneer—

Sir F. —O no, Mr. Dangle, do not I tell you these things never fret me in the least.

Dang. Nay, I only thought——

Sir F. —And let me tell you, Mr. Dangle, it is extremely affronting in you to suppose that I am hurt, when I tell you I am not.

Sneer. But why so warm, sir Fretful?

Sir F. Mr. Sneer, you are as absurd as Dangle. How often must I repeat to you, that nothing can vex me but your supposing it possible for me to mind the nonsense you have been repeating to me!—and let me tell you, if you continue to believe this, you must mean to insult me, gentlemen—and then your disrespect will affect me no more than the newspaper criticisms—and I shall treat it—with exactly the same calm indifference and philosophic contempt—and so your servant. [*Exit.*

Sneer. Ha! ha! ha! Poor sir Fretful! Now will he go and vent his philosophy in anonymous abuse of all modern critics and authors—But, Dangle, you must get your friend Puff to take me to the rehearsal of his tragedy.

Dang. I will answer for it, he will thank you for desiring it.—But, Sneer, I am afraid we were a little too severe on sir Fretful—though he is my friend.

Sneer. Why, it is certain that unnecessarily to mortify the vanity of any writer, is a cruelty which mere dulness never can deserve; but where a base and personal malignity usurps the place of literary emulation, the aggressor deserves neither quarter nor pity.

Dang. That is true, indeed—though he is my friend!

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Puff, sir !

Dang. My dear Puff !

Enter PUFF.

Puff. My dear Dangle, how is it with you ?

Dang. Mr. Sneer, give me leave to introduce Mr. Puff to you.

Puff. Mr. Sneer 'is this ? Sir, he is a gentleman whom I have long panted for the honor of knowing—a gentleman whose critical talents and transcendent judgment——

Sneer. —Dear sir——

Dang. Nay, do not be modest, Sneer ; my friend Puff only talks to you in the style of his profession.

Sneer. His profession !

Puff. Yes, sir ; I make no secret of the trade I follow—among friends and brother authors, Dangle knows I love to be frank on the subject, and to advertise myself vivâ voce.—I am, sir, a practitioner in panegyric, or, to speak more plainly—a professor of the art of puffing, at your service—or that of any body else.

Sneer. Sir, you are very obliging !—I believe, Mr. Puff, I have often admired your talents in the daily prints.

Puff. Yes, sir, I flatter myself I do as much business in that way as any six of the fraternity in town—Very hard work all the summer—Friend Dangle !

Crit.

c

never worked harder!—But harkye,—the winter managers were a little sore, I believe.

Dang. No—I believe they took it all in good part.

Puff. Ay!—Then that must have been affectation in them; for there were some of the attacks which there was no laughing at!

Sneer. Ay, the humorous ones—But I should think, Mr. Puff, that authors would in general be able to do this sort of work for themselves.

Puff. Why, yes—but in a clumsy way.—Besides, we look on that as an encroachment, and so take the opposite side.—I dare say now you conceive half the very civil paragraphs and advertisements you see, to be written by the parties concerned, or their friends.—No such thing—Nine out of ten manufactured by me in the way of business.

Sneer. Indeed!—

Puff. Even the auctioneers now—the auctioneers, I say, though the rogues have lately got some credit for their language—not an article of the merit theirs!—take them out of their pulpits, and they are as dull as catalogues!—No, sir;—it was I first enriched their style—it was I first taught them to crowd their advertisements with panegyrical superlatives, each epithet rising above the other—like the bidders in their own auction rooms! From me they learned to inlay their phraseology with variegated chips of exotic metaphor: by me too their inventive faculties were called forth.—Yes, sir, by me they were instructed to clothe

ideal walls with gratuitous fruits—to insinuate obsequious rivulets into visionary groves—to teach courteous shrubs to nod their approbation of the grateful soil! or on emergencies to raise upstart oaks, where there never had been an acorn; to create a delightful vicinage without the assistance of a neighbour; or fix the temple of Hygeia in the fens of Lincolnshire!

Dang. I am sure you have done them infinite service; for now, when a gentleman is ruined, he parts with his house with some credit.

Sneer. Service! if they had any gratitude, they would erect a statue to him; they would figure him as a presiding Mercury, the God of traffic and fiction, with a hammer in his hand instead of a caduceus. But pray, Mr. Puff, what first put you on exercising your talents in this way?

Puff. Why, sir,—sheer necessity—the proper parent of an art so nearly allied to invention. You must know, Mr. Sneer, that from the first time I tried my hand at an advertisement, my success was such, that for some time after I led a most extraordinary life indeed!

Sneer. How, pray?

Puff. Sir, I supported myself two years entirely by my misfortunes.

Sneer. By your misfortunes?

Puff. Yes, sir, assisted by long sickness, and other occasional disorders; and a very comfortable living I had of it.

Sneer. From sickness and misfortunes! You practised as a doctor and an attorney at once?

Puff. No, indeed. Both maladies and miseries were my own.* Harkye!—By advertisements——“To the charitable and humane!” and “to those who are blessed with affluence!”

Sneer. Oh,—I understand you.

Puff. And, in truth, I deserved what I got; for I suppose never man went through such a series of calamities in the same space of time!—Sir, I was five times made a bankrupt, and reduced from a state of affluence, by a train of unavoidable misfortunes! then, sir, though a very industrious tradesman, I was twice burnt out, and lost my little all; both times!—I lived upon those fires a month.—I soon after was confined by a most excruciating disorder, and lost the use of my limbs!—That told very well; for I had the case strongly attested, and went about to collect the subscriptions myself.

Dang. I believe that was when you first called on me—

Puff. What—in November last?—O no!—I was, when I called on you, a close prisoner in the Marshalsea, for a debt benevolently contracted to serve a friend!—I was afterwards twice tapped for a dropsy, which declined into a very profitable consumption!—I was then reduced to—O no—then, I became a widow with six helpless children,—and without money to get me into an hospital!

Sneer. And you bore all with patience, I make no doubt?

Puff. Why, yes,—though I made some occasional attempts at *felo de se*; but as I did not find those rash actions answer, I left off killing myself very soon.—Well, sir,—at last, what with bankruptcies, fires, gouts, dropsies, imprisonments, and other valuable calamities, having got together a pretty handsome sum, I determined to quit a business which had always gone rather against my conscience, and in a more liberal way still to indulge my talents for fiction and embellishment, through my favorite channels of diurnal communication—and so, sir, you have my history.

Sneer. Most obligingly communicative indeed; and your confession, if published, might certainly serve the cause of true charity, by rescuing the most useful channels of appeal to benevolence from the cant of imposition.

Puff. That is the consequence at which I aimed. And I assure you that I was myself not only soliciting from others, but affording from my own resources, assistance and support to those, whom I found to be real objects of distress.

Sneer. Indeed, I believe that you have done an essential service to humanity.—And now, sir, there is but one thing which can possibly encrease my respect for you, and that is, your permitting me to be present this morning at the rehearsal of your new tragedy—

Puff. —Hush!—My tragedy!—Dangle, I take this

very ill—you know how apprehensive I am of being known to be the author.

Dang. Indeed I would not have told—but it is in the papers, and your name at length—in the Morning Chronicle.

Puff. Ah! those vile editors never can keep a secret!—Well, Mr. Sneer—no doubt you will do me great honor—I shall be infinitely happy—highly flattered——

Dang. I believe it must be near the time: shall we go together?

Puff. No; it will not be yet this hour. But this rehearsal will not be at Drury Lane, but at my own house, where, by the assistance of my friends, I have fitted up a neat little Theatre.—Besides, I have some little matters to send to the papers, and a few paragraphs to scribble before I go. [*Looking at Memorandums*].—Here is a Prospectus for a new Life Assurance for Dogs.—I have to propose an Equitable Loan Society for Botany Bay.—I am to prove the advantages of a company to supply every house in London, by means of pipes, with hot water, to save the expense of fuel,—I am to recommend the establishment of steam-vessels to go to the South Sea through the North West passage.—I have a plan for cutting a Ship Canal through the Isthmus at Suez, the shares of which I expect will immediately bear a handsome premium.—But the most difficult article I have in hand is to prove that the education in our Public

Schools and Universities is detrimental to the best interests of the country.

Sneer. And pray, Mr. Puff, what man in his senses will believe that?

Puff. Sir, that is no business of mine. I shall be well paid for my labor.—So, gentlemen, you see that I have no time to lose.

Dang. Well, we will meet at your house.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.—SCENE I.

The private Theatre.

*Enter DANGLE, PUFF, and SNEER, as before
the Curtain.*

Puff. No, no, sir ; what Shakspeare says of actors may be better applied to the purpose of plays ; they ought to be “ the abstract and brief chronicles of the time.” Therefore when history, and particularly the history of our own country, furnishes any thing like a case in point, to the time in which an author writes, if he knows his own interest, he will take advantage of it : so, sir, I call my tragedy The Spanish Armada ; and have laid the scene before Tilbury Fort.

Sneer. A most happy thought, certainly !

Dang. It was—I told you so.—But pray now, I do not understand how you have contrived to introduce any love into it.

Puff. Love!—Oh nothing so easy : for it is a received point among poets, that where history gives you a good heroic outline for a play, you may fill up with a little love at your own discretion : in doing

which, nine times out of ten, you only make up a deficiency in the private history of the times. Now I rather think I have done this with some success.

Sneer. No scandal about queen Elizabeth, I hope?

Puff. O no, no.—I only suppose the governor of Tilbury Fort's daughter to be in love with the son of the Spanish admiral.

Sneer. Oh, is that all?

Dang. Excellent! I see it at once.—But will not this appear rather improbable?

Puff. To be sure it will—but a play is not to show occurrences that happen every day, but things just so strange, that though they never did, they might happen.

Sneer. Certainly nothing is unnatural, that is not physically impossible.

Puff. Very true—and for that matter Don Ferolo Whiskerandos—for that is the lover's name, might have been over here in the train of the Spanish ambassador; or Tilburina, for that is the lady's name, might have been in love with him, from having heard his character, or seen his picture; or from knowing that he was the last man in the world she ought to be in love with—or for any other good female reason.—However, sir, the fact is, though she is but a knight's daughter, she is in love like any princess!

Dang. Poor young lady! I feel for her already: for I conceive how great the conflict must be between her passion and her duty; her love for her country, and her love for Don Ferolo Whiskerandos!

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Puff. O amazing! her poor susceptible heart is swayed to and fro, by contending passions like—

Enter Prompter.

Prom. Sir, the scene is set, and every thing is ready to begin, if you please.—

Puff. Then we will lose no time.

Prom. Though I believe, sir, you will find it very short, for all the performers have profited by the kind permission you granted them.

Puff. Hey! what!

Prom. You know, sir, you gave them leave to cut out or omit whatever they found heavy or unnecessary to the plot; and I must own they have taken very liberal advantage of your indulgence.

Puff. Well, well.—They are in general very good judges; and I know I am luxuriant.—Now, Mr. Briscoe, as soon as you please.

Prom. to Music. Gentlemen, will you play a few bars of something, just to—

Puff. Ay, that is right,—for as we have the scenes and dresses, we will go to it, as if it was the first night's performance;—[*Exit Prompter. Orchestra play. Then the Bell rings*] Soh! stand clear, gentlemen.—Now you know there will be a cry of down!—down!—hats off!—silence!—Then up curtain,—and let us see what our painters have done for us.

SCENE II.

The Curtain rises, and discovers TILBURY FORT.

Two Sentinels asleep.

Dang. Tilbury Fort!—very fine indeed!—You have a very pretty theatre, Mr. Puff.

Puff. This, sir, is a theatre founded by charity. By the munificence and candor of my friends I have been enabled, from the produce of such exhibitions as these, to alleviate poverty, to remove pain and sickness, to pour balm into the wounds of our brave soldiers and sailors, and to assist the widows and orphans of those who have fallen in every great battle, from that of Ushant to that of Trafalgar.—Now what do you think I open with?

Sneer. I cannot guess—

Puff. A clock—

Sneer. A clock!

Puff. Hark!—[*Clock strikes*] I open with a clock striking, to beget an awful attention in the audience—it also marks the time, which is four in the morning, and saves a description of the rising sun, and a great deal about gilding the eastern hemisphere.

Dang. But, pray, are the sentinels to be asleep?

Puff. Fast as watchmen.

Sneer. Is not that odd though at such an alarming crisis?

Puff. To be sure it is:—but smaller things must

give way to a striking scene at the opening ; that is a rule.—And the case is, that two great men are coming to this very spot to begin the piece ; now, it is not to be supposed they would open their lips, if these fellows were watching them ; so. I must either have sent them off their posts, or set them asleep.

Sneer. O that accounts for it !—But tell us, who are these coming ?—

Puff. These are they—Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Christopher Hatton.—You will know Sir Christopher, by his turning out his toes—famous, you know, for his dancing. I like to preserve all the little traits of character.—Now attend.

“ *Enter* SIR WALTER RALEIGH and SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON.

“ *Sir C.* True, gallant Raleigh !”—

Dang. What, they had been talking before ?

Puff. O yes ; all the way as they came along.—I beg pardon, gentlemen, [*To the Actors*] but these are particular friends of mine, whose remarks may be of great service to us.—Do not mind interrupting them whenever anything strikes you. [*To Sneer and Dangle.*

“ *Sir C.* True, gallant Raleigh !

“ But O, thou champion of thy country's fame,

“ There is a question which I yet must ask ;

“ A question, which I never asked before—

“ What mean these mighty armaments ?

“ This general muster ? and this throng of chiefs ?”

Sneer. Pray, Mr. Puff, how came Sir Christopher Hatton never to ask that question before?

Puff. What, before the play began? how could he?

Dang. That is true!

Puff. But you will hear what he thinks of the matter.

“*Sir C.* Alas, my noble friend——”

Puff. Sir Christopher, pray turn out your toes. Sir Christopher Hatton was famous for dancing well.

“*Sir C.* Alas, my noble friend, when I behold

“Yon tented plains in martial symmetry

“Array’d—When I count o’er yon glittering lines

“Of crested warriors, when the proud steeds neigh :

“When virgin majesty herself I view,

“Like her protecting Pallas, veiled in steel,

“With graceful confidence exhort to arms :

“When briefly all I hear or see bears stamp

“Of martial vigilance, and stern defence,

“I cannot but surmise.—Forgive me, friend,

“If the conjecture’s rash—I cannot but

“Surmise——the state some danger apprehends !”

Sneer. A very cautious conjecture that.

Puff. Yes, that is his character ; not to give an opinion, but on secure grounds—now then.

“*Sir W.* O, most accomplished Christopher. ——”

Puff. He calls him by his Christian name, to show that they are on the most familiar terms.

“*Sir W.* O, most accomplished Christopher, I find

“Thy fears are just.

“*Sir C.* But where ? whence ? when ? and what,

“The danger is ——methinks I fain would learn.

" *Sir W.* You know, my friend, scarce two revolving
suns,

" And three revolving moons, have closed their course,

" Since haughty Philip, in despite of peace,

" With hostile hand hath struck at England's trade.

" *Sir C.* I know it well.

" *Sir W.* Philip, you know, is proud Iberia's king !

" *Sir C.* He is.

" *Sir W.* —His subjects, we are told, profess

" The tenets of the Catholics——while we

" You know, the Protestant persuasion hold.

" *Sir C.* We do.

" *Sir W.* You know besides——his boasted arma-
ment.

" The fam'd armada——by the Pope baptized,

" With purpose to invade these realms——

" *Sir C.* ——Is sailed,

" Our last advices so report.

" *Sir W.* While the Iberian admiral's chief hope,

" His darling son, by chance a pris'ner hath been ta'en,

" And in this fort of Tilbury——

" *Sir C.* ——Is now

" Confined ; and oft from yon tall turret's top

" I've marked the youthful Spaniard's haughty mien,

" Unconquered, tho' in chains.

" *Sir W.* You also know——"

Dang. Mr. Puff, as he knows all this, why does
sir Walter go on telling him ?

Puff. But the audience are not supposed to know
any thing of the matter, are they ?

Sneer. True, but I think you manage ill : for there
certainly appears no reason why sir Walter should be
so communicative.

Puff. Why now, that is one of the most ungrateful observations I ever heard—for the less inducement he has to tell all this, the more, I think, you ought to be obliged to him ; for I am sure you would know nothing of the matter without it.

Dang. That is very true, upon my word.

Puff. But you will find that he was not going on.

“*Sir C.* Enough, enough,—’tis plain—and I no more

“Am in amazement lost !——”

Puff. Here, now you see, Sir Christopher did not in fact ask any one question for his own information.

Sneer. No indeed :—his has been a most disinterested curiosity !

Dang. Really, I find, we are very much obliged to them both.

Puff. To be sure you are. Now then for the commander in chief, the earl of Leicester ! who, you know, was no favourite but of the Queen’s—We left off—“in amazement lost !”——

“*Sir C.* Am in amazement lost.——

“But, see where noble Leicester comes ! supreme

“In honors and command.

“*Sir W.* And yet, methinks,

“At such a time, so perilous, so feared,

“That staff might well become an abler grasp.

“*Sir C.* And so indeed think I. But soft he is here.”

Puff. Ay, they envy him.

Sneer. But who is this with him ?

Puff. O! a very valiant knight; the governor of the fort.—And now, I think, you shall hear some better language: I was obliged to be plain and intelligible in the first scene, because there was so much matter of fact in it; but now, you shall have trope, figure, and metaphor, as plenty as substantives.

“ *Enter* EARL of LEICESTER, and the Governor.

“ *Leic.* How’s this-e, my friends-e? is’t thus your new-fledged zeal-e,

“ And plumed valor moulds-e in roosted sloth-e?

Puff. Friends-e!—zeal-e!—sloth-e!—Pray, Mr. Cameron, what is the meaning of this pronunciation? You add a syllable to every word ending with a consonant!

“ *Leic.* Sir, it is the present fashion of the stage. A late distinguished actor, who was educated in France, introduced it into this country.

Puff. Sir, it may be the mode of speaking on the French stage; but it is contrary to the genius of the English language, and to the practice of Garrick, Henderson, and other ornaments of our stage; and it shall never be admitted in any play in which I am concerned.—Pray, sir, begin again, and speak like an Englishman.

“ *Leic.* How’s this, my friends? is’t thus your new-fledged zeal

“ And plumed valor moulds in roosted sloth?

“ Can the quick current of a patriot heart,

“ Thus stagnate in a cold and weedy converse,

"Or freeze in tideless inactivity ?

"No ! rather let the fountain of your valor

"Spring through each stream of enterprise,

"Each petty channel of conducive daring ;

"Till the full torrent of your foaming wrath

"O'erwhelm the flats of sunk hostility !

"*Sir W.* No more ! the fresh'ning breath of thy
rebuke

"Hath filled the swelling canvas of our souls !

"And thus, though fate should cut the cable of

[*All take Hands.*

"Our topmost hopes, in friendship's closing line

"We'll grapple with despair, and if we fall,

"We'll fall in glory's wake !

"*Leic.* There spoke old England's genius !

"Then, are we all resolv'd ?

"*All.* We are—all resolv'd !

"*Leic.* To conquer—or be free ?

"*All.* To conquer—or be free.

"*Leic.* All ?

"*All.* All."

Dang. Nem. con.

Puff. O yes, where they do agree on the stage,
their unanimity is wonderful !

"*Leic.* Then, let's embrace—and now,—

"While thus united, England shall disdain

"The proud armadas of insulting Spain !

"No foreign force this country shall subdue,

"While Prince and subjects to themselves are true !"

Puff. That is a sentiment which I wish to be im-
pressed on the heart of all my countrymen. Therefore,
sir, pray speak it over again, and with more spirit.
And, that it may be more impressive, repeat it, each in

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your turn, and go off with a glance at the pit.

[*Leicester, Sir Christopher, Sir Walter, and the Governor, repeat the lines each in his turn.*]

Dang. Bravo! a fine exit.

Sneer. Stay a moment.—

“[*The Sentinels get up.*]

“1 *Sent.* All this shall to lord Burleigh's ear.

“2 *Sent.* 'Tis meet it should. [*Exeunt Sentinels.*”

Dang. Hey! I thought those fellows had been asleep?

Puff. Only a pretence, there is the art of it; they were spies of lord Burleigh's.—Take care, my dear Dangle, the morning gun is going to fire.

Dang. Well, that will have a fine effect.

Puff. I think so, and helps to realize the scene.—[*Canon three times*] What!—three morning guns!—there never is but one!—ay, this is always the way at the theatre—give these fellows a good thing, and they never know when to have done with it. You have no more cannon to fire?

[*Prom. from within*] No, sir.

Puff. Now then, for soft music.

Sneer. Pray what, is that for?

Puff. It shows that Tilburina is coming; nothing introduces you a heroine like soft music.—Here she comes.

Dang. And her confidant, I suppose?

Puff. To be sure: here they are—inconsolable to the minuet in Ariadne! But, Mr. Prompter, pray shift the scene, and give us a view of nature in the country.

[*Soft music.*]

SCENE III.—*The Country.**Enter* TILBURINA *and* *Confidant.*

Til. Now has the whispering breath of gentle
morn

“Bade Nature’s voice and Nature’s beauty rise ;

“While orient Phœbus, with unborrowed hues,

“Clothes the waked loveliness, which all night slept

“In heavenly drapery ! Darkness is fled.

“Now flowers unfold their beauties to the sun,

“And blushing, kiss the-beam he sends to wake them.

“The striped carnation and the guarded rose,

“The vulgar wall-flower, and smart gillyflower,

“The polyanthus mean—the dapper daisy,

“Sweetwilliam, and sweet marjoram,—and all

“The tribe of single and double pinks !

“Now too, the feathered warblers tune their notes

“Around, and charm the listening grove—The lark !

“The linnet ! chaffinch ! bullfinch ! goldfinch ! green-
finch !

“—But, oh, to me, no joy can they afford !

“Nor rose, nor wall-flower, nor smart gillyflower,

“Nor polyanthus mean, nor dapper daisy,

“Nor William sweet, nor marjoram—nor lark,

“Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove !”

Puff. Your white handkerchief, madam——

Til. I thought, sir, I was not to use that till “heart-
rending woe.”

Puff. O yes, madam—at “the finches of the grove,”
if you please,

Til.

Nor lark,

"Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove ! [Weeps.]

Puff. Vastly well, madam !

Dang. Vastly well, indeed !

"*Til.* For, O, too sure, heart-rending woe is now

"The lot of wretched Tilburina !"

Dang. O !—'tis too much.

Sneer. Oh !——it is indeed.

"*Con.* Be comforted, sweet lady——for who knows,

"But fate has yet some milk-white day in store.

"*Til.* Alas, my gentle Nora,

"Thy tender youth as yet hath never mourned

"Love's fatal dart ; else wouldst thou know, that when

"The soul is sunk in comfortless despair,

"It cannot taste of merriment."

Dang. That is certain.

"*Con.* But see where your stern father comes ;

"It is not meet that he should find you thus."

Puff. Hey ! what a cut is here !——what is become of the description of her first meeting with Don Whiskerandos ? his gallant behaviour in the sea-fight, and the simile of the canary bird ?

Til. Indeed, sir, you will find they will not be missed.

Puff. Very well.—Very well !

Til. The cue, madam, if you please.

"*Con.* It is not meet that he should find you thus.

"*Til.* Thou counsel'st right, but 'tis no easy task

"For barefaced grief to wear a mask of joy.

"*Enter Governor.*

"*Gov.* How's this—in tears ?——O Tilburina, shame !

"Is this a time for maudling tenderness,
 "And Cupid's baby woes?—hast thou not heard
 "That haughty Spain's pope-consecrated fleet
 "Advances to our shores, while England's fate,
 "Like a clipped guinea, trembles in the scale!
 "Til. Then is the crisis of my fate at hand!
 "I see the fleet's approach,—I see——"

Puff. Now pray, gentlemen, mind.—This is one of the most useful figures we tragedy writers have, by which a hero or heroine, in consideration of being often obliged to overlook things that are on the stage, is allowed to hear and see a number of things that are not.

Sneer. Yes——a kind of poetical second-sight!

Puff. Yes—now then, madam.

"Til. I see their decks
 "Are cleaned!——I see the signal made!
 "The line is formed!——a cable's length asunder!
 "I see the frigates stationed in the rear;
 "And now I hear the thunder of the guns!
 "I hear the victor's shouts——I also hear
 "The vanquished groan!——and now 'tis smoke——
 and now
 "I see the loose sails shiver in the wind!
 "I see—I see—what soon you'll see—
 "Gov. Hold, daughter! peace! this love hath
 turned thy brain:
 "The Spanish fleet thou canst not see—because
 "——It is not yet in sight!"

Dang. But, sir, the governor seems to make no allowance for this poetical figure you talk of.

Puff. No, a plain matter-of-fact man—that is his character.

Til. But will you then refuse his offer ?

Gov. I must—I will—I can—I ought—I do.

Til. His liberty is all he asks."

Sneer. All who asks, Mr. Puff ? Who is—

Puff. Sir, I cannot tell—Here has been such cutting and slashing, I do not know where they have got to myself.

Til. Indeed, sir, you will find it will connect very well.

Puff. O,—if they had not been so free with their cutting here, you would have found that Don Whiskerandos has been tampering for his liberty—and now pray observe the conciseness with which the argument is conducted. The pro and con goes as smart as hits in a fencing match. It is indeed a sort of small-sword logic, which we have borrowed from the French.

Til. A retreat in Spain !

Gov. — Outlawry here !

Til. Your daughter's prayer !

Gov. — Your father's oath !

Til. My lover !

Gov. — My country !

Til. Tilburina !

Gov. — England !

Til. A title !

Gov. — Honor !

Til. A pension !

Gov. — Conscience !

Til. A thousand pounds !

Gov. Hah ! thou hast touched me nearly !"

Puff. There you see—she threw in Tilburina.

Quick, parry cart with England!—Hah! thrust in
 pierce a title! parried by honor.—Hah! a pension
 over the arm! put by by conscience.—Then flanconade
 with a thousand pounds—and a palpable hit.

“*Til.* Canst thou——

“Reject the suppliant, and the daughter too?

“*Gov.* No more; I would not hear thee plead in
 vain,

“The father softens—but the governor

“Is fixed!

[*Exit.*”

Dang. Ay, that antithesis of persons is a most
 established figure.

“*Til.* ’Tis well,——hence then, fond hopes,—fond
 passion, hence;

“Duty, behold I am all over thine——

“*Whisk.* [*Without*] Where is my love—my——

“*Til.* ——Ha!

“*Whisk.* [*Entering*] My beauteous enemy——”

Puff. O dear, madam, you must start a great deal
 more than that. Consider, you had just determined in
 favor of duty,—when, in a moment, the sound of his
 voice revives your passion,—overthrows your resolu-
 tion,—destroys your obedience. If you do not express
 all this in your start, you do nothing at all.

Til. Well, we will try again!——

Dang. Speaking from within has always a fine
 effect.

Sneer. Very.

“My conquering Tilburina! How! is’t thus

“We meet? why are thy looks averse! what means

“That falling tear——that frown of boding woe?.

“Hah! now indeed I am a prisoner!

"Yes, now, I feel the galling weight of these

"Disgraceful chains—which, cruel Tilburina!

"Thy doating captive gloried in before.—

"But thou art false, and Whiskerandos is undone!

"*Til.* O no; how little dost thou know thy Tilburina!

"*Whisk.* Art thou then true? Be gone cares, doubts, and fears,

"I make you all a present to the winds;

"And if the winds reject you—try the waves."

Puff. The wind, you know, is the established receiver of all stolen sighs, and cast-off griefs and apprehensions.

"*Til.* Yet must we part!—stern duty seals our doom:

"Though here I call yon conscious clouds to witness,

"Could I pursue the bias of my soul,

"All friends, all right of parents I'd disclaim,

"And thou, my Whiskerandos, shouldst be father

"And mother, brother, cousin, uncle, aunt,

"And friend to me!

"*Whisk.* O matchless excellence!—and must we part?

"Well, if—we must—we must—and in that case

"The less is said the better."

Puff. Hey-day! here is a cut!—What, are all the mutual protestations out?

Til. Now pray sir, do not interrupt us just here, you ruin our feelings.

Puff. Your feelings!—but, my feelings, madam!

Sneer. No, pray do not interrupt them.

"*Whisk.* One last embrace.—

"*Til.* Now, — farewell, for ever.

"*Whisk.* For ever!

"*Til.* Ay, for ever.

[*Going.*"]

Puff. Sir! Madam, if you go out without the parting look, you might as well dance out—Here, here!

Con. But pray, sir, how am I to get off here?

Puff. You! what signifies how you get off! edge away at the top, or where you will—[*Pushes the Confidant off.*] Now, madam, you see—

Til. We understand you, sir.

" Ay for ever.

"*Both.* Oh!—

[*Turning back, Exeunt.*"]

Dang. O charming!

Puff. Hey!—'tis pretty well, I believe—you see I do not attempt to strike out any thing new—but I take it I improve on the established modes.

Sneer. You do, indeed.

Puff. Now, Mr. Briscoe, as soon as you please.

Enter Prompter.

Prom. Sir, the carpenter says it is impossible you can go to the park scene yet.

Puff. The park scene! No—I mean the description scene here, in the wood.

Prom. Sir, the performers have cut it out.

Puff. Cut it out?

Prom. Yes, sir.

Puff. What! the whole account of queen Elizabeth?

Prom. Yes, sir.

Puff. And the description of her horse and side-saddle?

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Prom. Yes, sir.

Puff. So, so, this is very fine indeed! Sir, how could you suffer this?

Prom. Sir, indeed the pruning-knife—

Puff. The pruning-knife—the axe! why, here has been such lopping and topping, I shall not have the bare trunk of my play left presently.—Very well, sir—the performers must do as they please, but upon my honor, I will print it every word.

Sneer. That I would, indeed.

Puff. Very well, sir, then we must go on.—I would not have parted with the description of the horse!—Sir, it was one of the finest and most labored things.—Very well, let them go on—there you had him and his accoutrements from the bit to the crupper.—Well, sir, if you must cut out the description, give us at least the wood scene.—To cut out the description! But I will print it. I will print it every word.

SCENE IV. *The Wood.*

Enter CONSTABLE.

Cons. O Tilburina, when I love thee not,

“Chaos is come again!”

Sneer. Have not I heard that line before?

Puff. No, I fancy not—Where, pray?

Dang. Yes, I think there is something like it in Othello.

Puff. Now you put me in mind of it, I believe there is—but that is of no consequence—all that can be said is, that two people happened to hit on the same thought—And Shakspeare made use of it first, that is all.

Sneer. Very true.

Puff. Now, sir, your soliloquy—but speak more to the pit, if you please—the soliloquy always to the pit—that is a rule.

“*Cons.* Though hopeless love finds comfort in despair,

“ It never can endure a rival’s bliss !

“ But soft—I am observed. [Exit Constable.”

Dang. That is a very short soliloquy.

Puff. Yes—but it would have been a great deal longer if he had not been observed.

Sneer. A most sentimental constable that, Mr. Puff.

Puff. Harkye—I would not have you be too sure he is a constable.

Sneer. What, a hero in disguise ?

Puff. No matter—I only give you a hint—But now for my principal character—Here he comes—Lord Burleigh in person ! Pray, gentlemen, attend—softly—if he is but perfect.—But, Mr. Prompter, pray give us a scene suitable to his character,—a palace !

SCENE V. *A Palace.*

Enter BURLEIGH, goes slowly to a Chair and sits.

Sneer. Mr. Puff!

Puff. Hush! vastly well, sir! vastly well! a most interesting gravity!

Dang. What is not he to speak at all?

Puff. I thought you would ask me that—yes, it is a very likely thing—that a minister in his situation, with the whole affairs of the nation on his head, should have time to talk!—but hush! or you will put him out.

Sneer. Put him out! how can that be, if he is not going to say any thing?

Puff. There is a reason! why, his part is to think, and how do you imagine he can think if you keep talking?

Dang. That is very true, upon my word!

[Burleigh comes forward, shakes his head and exit.]

Sneer. He is very perfect indeed—Now, pray what did he mean by that?

Puff. You do not take it?

Sneer. No; I do not, upon my honor.

Puff. Why, by that shake of the head, he gave you to understand that even though they had more justice in their cause, and wisdom in their measures—yet, if there was not a greater spirit shown on the part of the people—the country would at last fall a sacrifice to the hostile ambition of the Spanish monarchy.

Sneer. Did he mean all that by shaking his head?

Puff. Every word of it—If he shook his head as I taught him.

Sneer. O, here are some of our old acquaintance.

Puff. We will have, if you please, a characteristic scene for these great men.

SCENE VI. *A Camp.*

“*Enter* HATTON and RALEIGH.

“*Sir C.* My niece, and your niece too!

“There must be witchcraft in’t—He could not else

“Have gained their hearts—But see where they approach;

“Some horrid purpose lowering on their brows!

“*Sir W.* Let us withdraw and mark them.

“*[They withdraw.]*”

Sneer. What is all this?

Puff. Ah! here has been more pruning!—but the fact is, these two young ladies are also in love with Don Whiskerandos.—Now, gentlemen, this scene goes entirely for what we call situation and stage effect, by which the greatest applause may be obtained, without the assistance of language, sentiment, or character: pray mark!

“*Enter the two Nieces.*

“*1 Niece.* Ellena here!

“She is his scorn as much as I—that is

“Some comfort still.”

Puff. O dear, Madam, you are not to speak that to her face! *aside*, Madam, *aside*! The whole scene is to be *aside*.

"1 Niece. She is his scorn as much as I—that is

"Some comfort still!

"2 Niece. I know he prizes not Pollina's love;

"But Tilburina lords it o'er his heart.

"1 Niece. But see the proud destroyer of my peace.

"Revenge is all the good I've left. [*Aside*.

"2 Niece. He comes, the false disturber of my quiet.

"Now vengeance do thy worst—— [*Aside*.

"Enter WHISKERANDOS.

"*Whisk.* O hateful liberty—if thus in vain

"I seek my Tilburina!

"*Both Nieces.* And ever shalt!

"[*Sir C. and Sir W. come forward*] Hold! we will
avenge you.

"*Whisk.* Hold you—or see your nieces bleed—

"[*The two Nieces draw their two Daggers to strike Whiskerandos, the two Uncles at the instant with their two swords drawn catch their two Nieces' Arms, and turn the Points of their Swords to Whiskerandos, who immediately draws two Daggers, and holds them to the two Nieces' Bosoms.*"]

Puff. There is situation for you! there is an heroic group!—You see the ladies cannot stab Whiskerandos—he durst not strike them for fear of their uncles—the uncles durst not kill him because of their nieces—I have them all at a dead lock!—for every one of them is afraid to let go first.

Sneer. Why, then they must stand there for ever.

Puff. So they would, if I had not a very fine contrivance for it—Now mind——

“ *Enter CONSTABLE, with his Halberd.* ”

“ *Cons.* In the Queen’s name I charge you all to drop

“ Your swords and daggers ! ”

“ [*They drop their Swords and Daggers.*] ”

Sneer. That is a contrivance indeed.

Puff. Ay—in the Queen’s name.

“ *Sir C.* Come, niece ! ”

“ *Sir W.* Come, niece ! [*Exeunt with the two Nieces.* ”

“ *Whisk.* What’s he, who bids us thus renounce our guard ? ”

“ *Cons.* Thou must do more—renounce thy love ! ”

“ *Whisk.* Thou liest—base Constable ! ”

“ *Cons.* Ha ! the lie ! ”

“ Ha ! thou hast roused the lion in my heart ! ”

“ Off yeoman’s habit !—base disguise ! off ! off ! ”

“ [*Discovers himself, by throwing off his upper Coat and appearing in a very fine Dress.* ”

“ Am I a Constable now ? ”

“ Or beams my crest as terrible as when

“ In Biscay’s Bay I took thy captive sloop.”

Puff. There ! he comes out to be the very captain of the frigate who had taken Whiskerandos prisoner—and was himself an old lover of Tilburina’s.

Dang. Admirably managed indeed.

“ *Whisk.* I thank thee, fortune ! that hast thus bestowed

“ A weapon to chastise this insolent.

“ [*Takes up one of the Swords.* ”

“ *Cons.* I take thy challenge, Spaniard, and I thank

“ Thee, fortune, too !— [*Takes up the other Sword.* ”

Dang. That is excellently contrived. It seems as

if the uncles had left their swords on purpose for them.

Puff. No, indeed; they could not help leaving them.

" Whisk. Vengeance and Tilburina!

" Cons.

Exactly so——

" [They fight, and after the usual number of wounds given, Whiskerandos falls.

" Whisk. O cursed parry!——that last thrust in tierce

" Was fatal!——Captain, thou hast fenced well!

" And Whiskerandos quits this bustling scene

" For all eter——

" Cons. ——nity——He would have added, but stern death

" Cut short his being, and the noun at once!"

Puff. O, my dear sir, you are too slow, now mind me.—Sir, shall I trouble you to die again?

" Whisk. And Whiskerandos quits this bustling scene

" For all eter——

" Cons. ——nity——He would have added——"

Puff. No, sir—that is not it—once more, if you please—

Whisk. I wish, sir, you would practise this without me—I cannot stay dying here all night.

Puff. Very well, we will go over it by-and-by—I must humor these gentlemen. [*Exit Whiskerandos.*

" Cons. Farewell, brave Spaniard! and when next——"

Puff. Dear sir, you need not speak that speech as the body has walked off.

Cons. That is true, sir—then I will join the fleet.

Puff. If you please. [*Exit Constable.*] Now, who comes on?

"Enter Governor, with his hair properly disordered.

*"Gov. A hemisphere of evil planets reign,
 "And every planet sheds contagious frenzy!
 "My Spanish prisoner is slain! my daughter,
 "Meeting the dead corpse borne along, is gone
 "Distract! [Trumpets.] But hark! I'm summoned to the
 fort!
 "Perhaps the fleets have met. Amazing crisis!
 "O Tilburina, from thy father's beard
 "Thou'st plucked the few brown hairs that time had
 left! [Exit."*

Sneer. Poor gentleman!

Puff. Yes, and no one to blame but his daughter.

Dang. And the planets.—

*Puff. True. Now enter Tilburina, stark mad, in
 white satin!*

Sneer. Why in white satin!

*Puff. O, sir—when a heroine goes mad, she always
 goes into white satin—does not she, Dangle?*

Dang. Always—it is a rule.

*Puff. Yes—here it is—[Looking at the Book]
 "Enter Tilburina stark mad in white satin, and her
 confidant stark mad in white linen."—But, Mr.
 Prompter, give us a scene suited to madness and
 despair.*

SCENE VII.—*A Bridge.*

*"Enter TILBURINA and CONFIDANT mad, according to
 Custom.*

Sneer. What! is the confidant to be mad too?

Crit.

G

Puff. To be sure she is : the confidant is always to do whatever her mistress does ; weep when she weeps, smile when she smiles, go mad when she goes mad.—Now, madam confidant—but keep your madness in the back ground, if you please.

“ *Til.* The wind whistles—the moon rises—see

“ They have killed my squirrel in his cage !

“ Is this a grasshopper ?—Ha ! no, it is my

“ Whiskerandos—you shall not keep him—”

“ I know you have him in your pocket—

“ An oyster may be cross’d in love !—Who says

“ A whale’s a bird ?—Ha ! did you call my love ?

“ —He’s here ! He’s there !—He’s every where !

“ Ah me ! He’s no where ! *[Exit. Tilburina.]*”

Puff. There do you ever desire to see any body madder than that ?

Sneer. Never, while I live !

Puff. You observed how she mangled the metre.

Dang. Yes, indeed ; that made me suspect she was out of her senses.

Sneer. And pray, what becomes of her ?

Puff. She is gone to throw herself into the sea, to be sure—and that brings us at once to the scene of action, and so to my catastrophe—my sea-fight, I mean. You are all ready ?

Prom. Sir, I am sorry you cannot have the sea-fight in this small theatre. Besides, it would incur an expense, which would frustrate the object of this representation.

Puff. Gentlemen, you will have it in all its splendor and effect at Drury Lane. But this rehearsal is before an audience distinguished for liberality, who will feel more gratification in contributing to the moral and religious education of the poor, than they would by a momentary show in the representation of a sea-fight.

Dang. But give us something, in conclusion ; a loyal national song.

Puff. With all my heart. In allusion to the event of the sea-fight, we shall have **RULE BRITANNIA**, afterwards **GOD SAVE THE KING**, in which, I am sure, not only the actors, but the audience will join in full chorus. A sea-scene, if you please, Mr. Prompter.

SCENE VIII.—*The Sea.*

RULE BRITANNIA !

GOD SAVE THE KING !

THE END.

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